

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached two sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 2A, 2B and 26 (as shown in red). Please substitute these sheets (pages 2/71 and 26/71) for the originally filed sheets of drawings.

Attachment: Annotated Sheets Showing Changes

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-47 stand in the present application, claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 20, 25 and 27 having been amended and claims 33-47 having been canceled. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 26 and 28-31 and the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 12, but respectfully submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks that all of the claims standing in the present application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings and the specification for a number of technical deficiencies. As noted above, Applicants have submitted annotated sheets for Figures 2A, 2B and 26 showing corrections made in red ink. The changes to the drawings will be made to the formal drawings upon receipt of permission from the Examiner. Applicants have also amended the specification in order to obviate the technical deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. In view of the revisions to the drawings and amendments to the specification the Examiner's objections are believed to have been overcome.

The Examiner has objected to claims 6 and 10 for including periods instead of commas in the middle of these claims. As noted above, Applicants have amended claims 6 and 10 in order to correct the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner.

The Examiner has rejected claims 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's § 112, first paragraph, rejection of these claims.

The claims rejected by the Examiner were filed in a Preliminary Amendment concurrently filed with the present application and accordingly should be considered as part of the application as filed. Therefore, the claims are fully supported by the present application and it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection of the claims should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claims 3, 7, 11 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. In view of the above-described amendments to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that the technical deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner have been obviated and accordingly, the Examiner's § 112, second paragraph, rejection of these claims is now believed to be moot.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 32, 33, 35-37 and 39-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Mueller et al. (Mueller) and has rejected claims 4, 7, 8, 15, 17, 19, 21-23, 34, 38 and 45-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller, has rejected claims 1-11, 13-20, 24, 25 and 32-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by WO 2004/030109 (WO '109) and has rejected claims 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO '109. In view of the above described claim amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the Mueller and WO '109 references no longer constitute prior art against the amended claims and therefore that the claims as amended are in condition for allowance as will be described in greater detail below.

More particularly, the Mueller and WO '109 references do not properly constitute prior art against the present application in view of the above-described claim amendments. As noted in the attached 37 CFR 1.131 Declaration of Keiichi Gonjou, the inventions described by the amended claims in the present application were conceived prior to October 14, 2002, which is the earliest possible effective date for the Mueller and WO '109 references. Evidence of the earlier conception date for the amended claims is provided in the exhibits attached to the aforementioned Rule 1.131 Declaration.

In addition, as noted in the aforementioned Declaration which establishes two of the foreign priority documents prior to the October 14, 2002 earliest effective filing date of the cited references also establishes that the inventions as reflected in the amended claims were diligently reduced to practice by October 16, 2002 when the aforementioned priority documents were filed in the Japanese Patent Office. Certified translations of these two priority documents as well as all of the other priority documents identified in this case are also attached hereto.

Since the inventions described by the amended claims establish an earlier conception date than the cited references and were diligently reduced to practice from a date prior to the date of the cited references, i.e., October 14, 2002, until October 16, 2002, two days later when the priority documents were filed in the Japanese Patent Office, the cited references do not constitute proper prior art against the present amended claims. Since all of the Examiner's rejections of the amended claims are based on Mueller and WO '109, it is respectfully submitted that all of the Examiner's

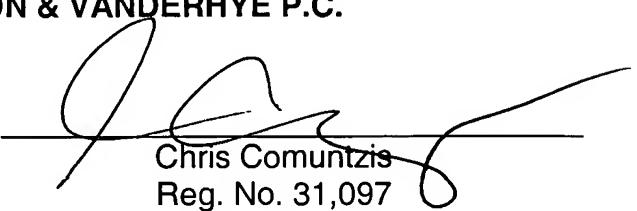
claim rejections should be withdrawn. Accordingly, all of the claims remaining in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered together with the attached Rule 1.131 Declaration and the attached exhibits, as well as the certified translations of all priority documents and that all of claims 1-32, standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Fig. 2 A

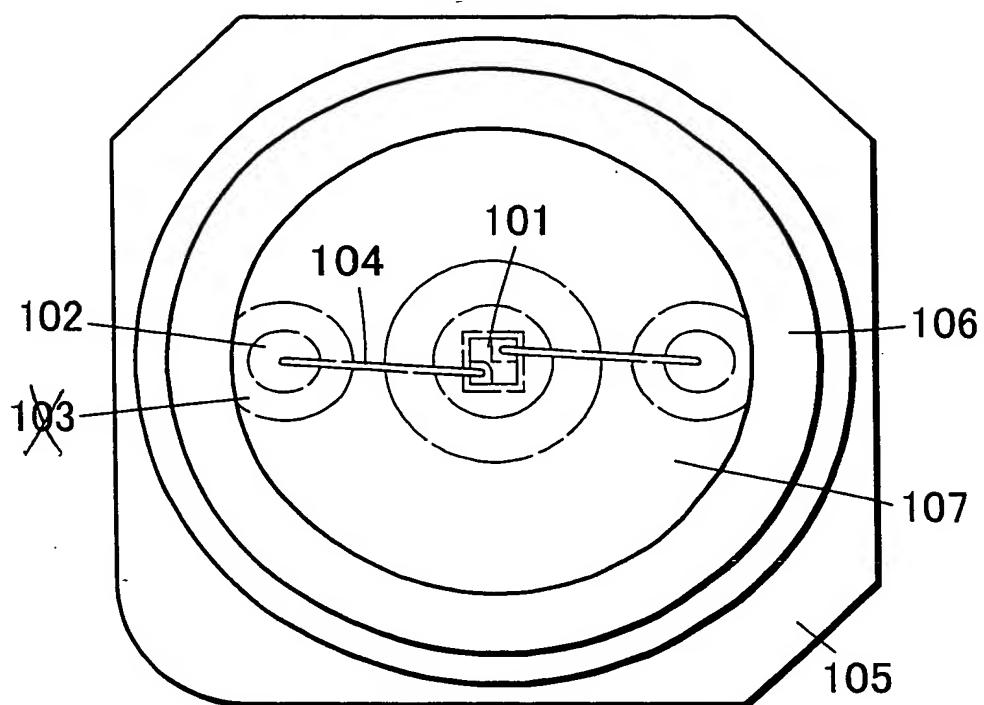
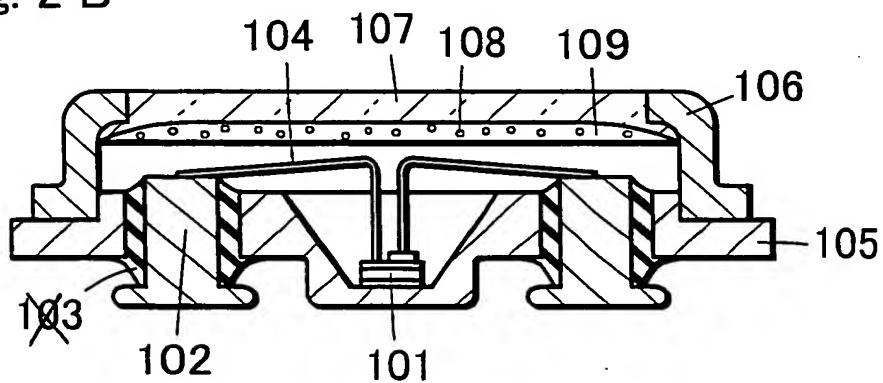


Fig. 2 B



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Fig. 26

